

# CUOMO HAD A DIFFERENT STANDARD FOR PRIESTS

Now that Gov. Cuomo has been accused of being a serial predator, he is insisting that his due process rights be respected. Yet when it came to accused priests, Cuomo sang a different tune.

Cuomo has a different standard for himself. When asked about the charges against him, he said, "You can allege something, might be true, might not be true. You may have misperceived, there may be other facts."

If this is his best defense, the man is in trouble. Nevertheless, what he said was accurate. Not all allegations are true. Misperceptions are not uncommon. There may be other facts that have yet to surface. That's why the accused, including him, are entitled to due process.

However, when it came to allegations against priests—for offenses alleged to have happened decades earlier—Cuomo showed no respect for their due process rights. He was happy to sign legislation that gave rapacious lawyers out to sunder the Catholic Church all the leeway they wanted.

Just as important, Cuomo knew these lawyers would focus on the Church and not pursue claims against public school teachers. Given the generosity of the teachers' unions at election time, he was not about to demand that their sordid record of child rape be prosecuted.

When Cuomo signed the bill aimed at the Catholic Church in 2019, he called out the Church for fighting the legislation. What he said was as ignorant as it was cruel.

Cuomo accused Catholic Church officials of "threatening" those who were not supportive of their opposition to the bill. He

said, "I believe it was the conservatives in the Senate who were threatened by the Catholic Church. And this went on for years."

When teachers' unions oppose a bill it is called lobbying. When bishops oppose a bill it is called a threat. Cuomo's double standard, and his animus against the Catholic Church, could not be more plain.

What he failed to note is that for over a decade, bills targeting the sexual abuse of minors did not apply to the public sector. It took the bishops, and the Catholic League, to demand that the bill be made inclusive of all entities. We didn't threaten anyone.

Our major concern was the due process rights of accused priests. Most of the allegations took place a very long time ago, making it difficult to determine innocence or guilt. We know that memories fade and witnesses die, which is why we have statutes of limitations in the first place. There is nothing "threatening" about opposing bills that gut this fundamental due process provision.

If we had said about accused priests, "You can allege something, might be true, might not be true. You may have misperceived, there may be other facts," would Cuomo have agreed? Not a chance.

In fact, on the day he signed the bill that the Church opposed, he blithely assumed that all of the accused priests were guilty. "I want to start by applauding these victims/advocates who went through a horrendous violation in life and an aggravated defilement because it was a person in authority, a person who was supposed to be respected."

So there we have it. The accusers are to be believed and the accused is guilty. If Cuomo's standard for priests were applied to himself, then his accusers are telling the truth and he is guilty. And if that is the case, why is he still in

office, especially now that he is accused of sexual assault?

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## **WILL AMAZON CENSOR THE POPE?**

Ryan T. Anderson was recently named president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, a respectable conservative think tank in Washington, D.C. He is a brilliant social commentator who spent several years at The Heritage Foundation. One of his books, "When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Movement," is no longer available on Amazon. That's because it is a critical analysis of this phenomenon.

If Anderson is too controversial for Amazon, then it is only a matter of time before Pope Francis is censored. That actually would be great—it's time the cancel culture mavens had their tyrannical powers blow up in their faces.

Available on Amazon is a book, "San Giovanni Paolo Magno," authored by Father Luigi Maria Epicoco and Pope Francis, that was published last year in Italian. In it the pope condemns gender theory—the idea that men and women can switch their sex—as "evil." The pope made it clear that he was not referring to "those who have a homosexual orientation." Rather, he was referring to "an attack on difference, on God's creativity, on man and woman."

Is Amazon going to censor this book? If so, where will it stop? If not, why not?

This was hardly the first time Pope Francis denounced gender ideology. In 2015, he called this novel idea "ideological colonization," saying that it preys on children. Indeed, he said it was analogous to "the Hitler Youth." In 2014, he went further, arguing that "Gender ideology is demonic."

Now if these remarks by the Holy Father were to appear in a book, would Amazon carry it?

The appetite for censorship on the left is at a fever pitch. Those responsible for this assault on free speech need to be subjected to much greater scrutiny on the part of Congress than has been true to date.

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## **CUOMO ISN'T THE ONLY "PRO-WOMEN" PHONY**

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is accused by multiple young women of sexual misconduct. He is also a rabid supporter of abortion-on-demand, including partial-birth abortions.

At the end of his press conference on March 3rd, after defending himself against these charges, he touted his "pro-women" record. "We have more senior women in this administration than probably any administration in history." His top aide, Melissa DeRosa, agreed, saying, he is a big proponent of "reproductive health."

Cuomo is not alone among Democrats who have been accused of sexual misconduct, yet brag how "pro-women" they are. Here is a sample.

### **Joe Biden – President**

- Accused of sexually assaulting a staff assistant in 1993
- "The Biden administration is committed to codifying Roe v. Wade and appointing judges that respect foundational precedents like Roe."

### **Bill Clinton – President**

- Accused of sexual assault and misconduct by four women: One woman accused Mr. Clinton of raping her in 1978; another accused him of sexually assaulting her in 1980; a third woman accused Clinton of exposing himself to her in 1991 and sexually harassing her; and a fourth accused Clinton of groping her without her consent in 1993.
- “The Government simply has no right to interfere with decisions that must be made by women of America to make the right choice.”

### **Eric Schneiderman – Former Attorney General of New York**

- Accused of sexually and physically abusing four women and forced to resign from office
- “No state law can restrict a woman’s constitutional right to make her own reproductive health choices. This opinion makes crystal clear that all women have a constitutional right to an abortion, irrespective of inconsistent state law.”

### **Anthony Weiner – Former Congressman (D-NY)**

- Accused of sending sexually suggestive images to several women over his career and forced to resign from office
- In response to the Supreme Court ruling on partial birth abortions, Weiner asked for “a hearing so that we can move to overturn the underlying ban on a certain type of late-term abortion.” He called the ruling “an affront to women across the country.”

### **Al Franken – Former Senator (D-MN)**

- Accused of groping or forcibly kissing more than 10 women and forced to resign from office
- In a speech to NARAL, Franken said, “a woman’s right to choose is never fully won. It must be won anew every day, every year, every Congress, and every generation.”

### **John Conyers – Former Congressman (D-MI)**

- Accused of sexually harassing staffers and firing those women who complained and forced to resign from office
- Conyers voted against a ban on partial birth abortions and for federal funding of abortions

### **Eliot Spitzer – Former Governor of New York**

- Accused of soliciting sex from an escort service and forced to resign from office
- “I want to make it clear from the start that if the new Supreme Court turns its back on women’s privacy and limits or overturns Roe vs. Wade, I will do everything in my power to preserve that right here in New York.”

### **Bobby Scott – Congressman (D-VA)**

- Accused of sexual misconduct by a former staffer who claims he dismissed her after she refused his advances
- In a 2020 letter to Nancy Pelosi, Scott joined other legislators in saying, “As proud members of the first pro-choice majority in the House of Representatives, we unequivocally oppose efforts to roll back access to reproductive health services, including abortion...”

These men all have a clear conscience. They are convinced they are champions of women’s rights, thus making moot their sexual misconduct.

As long as they have a pro-abortion record, they can treat women any way they want. The sad thing is how many voters, including women, agree with this assessment.

For Catholics, abortion is as anti-women as it is anti-child, thus it is not surprising that those who champion it would be accused of sexually abusing women.

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# CATHOLIC CHURCH'S ROLE IN ENDING SLAVERY

During Black History Month, the subject of slavery was discussed in many forums. In some cases, treatment of the Catholic Church's role has been misrepresented.

Slavery is one of the most ubiquitous and historically accepted institutions in history. There is not a place on the globe where slavery did not exist, and protests against it have been extremely rare. The Hebrews, Greeks and Romans saw nothing wrong with it, and neither did the Africans, Chinese and Japanese. Aristotle thought slavery was a normal way of life.

It is important to recognize that, notwithstanding the American experience, slavery has almost never had anything to do with race: people of the same race, ethnicity, tribe, or clan enslaved each other. Moreover, it was not uncommon for former slaves to enslave others. That slavery still exists today in parts of Africa (which did not make it illegal until the 1980s) is proof of its tenacious legacy.

If slavery was considered normal throughout most of history, when, and for what reasons, was it finally seen as objectionable? We can credit Western civilization with that honor: It was the first civilization to condemn slavery. The driving force behind it was Christianity.

The first person in history to condemn slavery publicly was Saint Patrick. A former slave himself, he enunciated the wisdom of natural law without specifically invoking it. All men were created equal in the eyes of God, he said, and should therefore be treated as equals in law. It was this quintessentially Catholic concept—all humans possess equal dignity—that eventually proved to be triumphant.

In antiquity, slavery was so common that Pope Pius I in the second century and Pope Callistus I in the third century were slaves. It wasn't until the fourth century that a bishop rejected slavery, and that was Gregory of Nyssa.

In practice, the Church's opposition to slavery began with its objections to the inhumane treatment of slaves; only later did it condemn the institution itself. But by protesting maltreatment, it did more to lay the groundwork for the eventual demise of slavery than any other institution, secular or religious.

Given the Church's role in opposing slavery it was troubling to read a recent Washington Post article posted online by Shannen Dee Williams, a professor of history at Villanova University. Apparently unaware of Saint Patrick and Gregory of Nyssa (who later became a saint), she claims the Church played "the leading role" in the history of slavery. She even goes so far as to say that the Catholic Church was "the first global institution to declare that Black lives did not matter."

This is not simply an example of shoddy scholarship—it is a vicious lie. To make her case, she cites papal bulls by Pope Nicholas V in 1452 and Pope Alexander VI in 1493 as evidence that "the Catholic Church authorized the perpetual enslavement of Africans and the seizure of 'non-Christian lands.'" This account is seriously flawed.

Nicholas V's "Dum Diversas" was a response to those who sought "to extinguish [the] Christian religion." The pope argued that the King of Portugal had a right to protect his people and to hold in "perpetual servitude" the Saracens (Muslims) and pagans who threatened Christianity. The pope did not make a sweeping statement about enslaving Africans, as Williams contends.

Pope Alexander VI's "Inter Caetera" awarded colonial rights over newly discovered lands to Spain and Portugal. Nowhere in



his papal bull does the pope even mention slaves or slavery. For Williams to imply otherwise is scurrilous.

Had Williams dug a little deeper she would have cited Pope Paul III's decision to forbade slavery in the New World under penalty of excommunication. This was in 1537, at a time when no other leader, secular or religious, was denouncing slavery. In 1839, Pope Gregory XVI also condemned slavery, but it was Pope Leo XIII in 1888 who took the most authoritative steps to abolish this institution.

It was the Catholic Church's teaching on natural law—all humans possess equal dignity and equal rights—that proved to be determinative in the end. Aristotle may be the father of natural law but he thought it was normal for slaves to obey their masters. The Church disagreed. It invoked natural rights—our equal rights come from God, not government—thus making the case to undermine slavery.

An honest historical account of the role played by the Catholic Church in ending slavery is not being taught in the schools, at any level. This has less to do with scholarship than it does politics.

To cite one example, how many college students are aware that the first prominent sociologist in American history, George Fitzhugh, was known as a progressive and a strong defender of slavery? In the 1850s, he maintained that because blacks were intellectually and morally inferior to white people, they could never successfully compete with whites in a capitalist society and were therefore better off as slaves. This is what happens when natural law and natural rights are jettisoned.

It is time for those in education, and for the publishers of elementary and secondary textbooks in history and the social sciences, to render an accurate depiction of the Catholic Church's role in ending slavery.